

GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM

Friday, September 15, 2006

Hello, this is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

As you may know the first awards from the 21st Century Jobs Fund were handed out just a few days ago.

61 companies, entrepreneurs, non-profit and research institutions received more than \$100 million to develop cutting edge technologies and create more than 3,000 jobs here in Michigan. All from our tobacco settlement funds so it won't raise your taxes.

Almost half of these grants were given to companies and projects involved in Michigan's burgeoning life sciences industry.

These are companies researching and about to produce life saving medications and treatments for our most challenging diseases.

Companies like ProNAI Therapeutics in Kalamazoo where I visited last week working on a new way to combat cancer. And researchers at Wayne State University and the Karmanos Cancer Institute in Detroit who are developing a new technology to better detect breast cancer early.

These two projects, and dozens of others, are working to improve medical testing and technology, developing new ways to administer medication safely and identifying new treatments for Alzheimers, arthritis and much more.

While they create jobs in the short term, all of these projects are also a long-term investment for our health care industry.

But we can, and we are, working to improve access to affordable health care today.

Next week, we will celebrate the 2nd anniversary of Michigan's drug discount card program. The MiRx card is already helping 38,000 Michigan citizens afford their prescription medications by providing a cost savings of 20 percent at more than 2,300 pharmacies across Michigan.

Our goal, through the Department of Community Health, is to put the MiRx card in the hands of 50,000 Michigan citizens by the end of this year.

Any Michigan resident whose income is at or below the state's median income – that's about \$56,000 for a family of four – should have the MiRx card if they don't have other prescription drug coverage.

It's a small card that can make a big difference and it's free.

The MI First Health Care Plan will also make a big difference for citizens struggling without health insurance. For the first time, we will offer universal access to affordable health care in Michigan.

Our negotiations with the federal government continue and we are on track to implement this program next spring, April of 2007.

We are acting today to ensure that our citizens have access to affordable health care while investing in the treatments, medications and technologies that will improve health care tomorrow.

It is the right plan for Michigan citizens and the plan I will continue to fight for as Governor.

Thank you for listening.